



SIREPA

SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

Minutes of the SIREPA Board of Directors
Thursday, May 16, 2024, 2:15 p.m.
In-Person at Lee County Career Center or via Zoom
2495 280th St, Montrose, IA

I. **Call to Order** at 2:15 p.m. by Mike Hickey, Chair

Roll Call:

Board Members Present: Director Mike Hickey (Chair); Director Bob Dodds (Vice-Chair); Director Bruce Hardy (Secretary/Treasurer); Director Michael Dunn via Zoom; Director Jack Smith; ; Ex-Officio, Matt Larson, State Treasurer's Office via Zoom

Board Members Absent:

SEIRPC Staff Present: Mike Norris; and Sherri Jones via Zoom

Guest(s) Present: Garry Seyb, Lee County Supervisor, Denise Boyer; Tim Fencl, Danville Mutual Telephone Company; Dennis Fraise, Lee County Economic Development Group; Emily Benjamin, Lee County Economic Development Group; Laura Liegois, Fort Madison City Manager; and Joe Benedict, Daily Gate City, via Zoom

II. **Consider Approval of May 16, 2024 Agenda (Board Action):**

Hardy made a motion to approve the May 16, 2024, meeting agenda, second by Smith. Motion carried.

III. **Consider Approval of March 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes (Board Action):**

Smith made a motion to approve the March 12, 2024, meeting minutes, second by Hardy. Motion carried.

IV. Consider Acceptance of Financial Report (Board Action):

Hardy made a motion to approve the April 30, 2024, financial report, second by Smith. Motion carried.

V. Approve Clean Ports Statutory Partnership (Board Action):

Norris said the US EPA has issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for its Clean Ports grant program. Program goals include building a foundation for the port sector to transition over time to fully zero-emissions operations, positioning ports to serve as a catalyst for transformational change across the freight sector, reducing diesel pollution in near-port communities, and helping ensure that meaningful community engagement and emissions reduction planning are port industry standard practices. Hall Towing in Fort Madison, IA, intends to apply for a Clean Ports grant to replace petro-fueled equipment with electric equipment. SIREPA will serve as a statutory partner for the funds. The statutory partner can serve in a variety of roles depending on the situation in the EPA Clean Ports guidance. SIREPA would defer all responsibility of funding, compliance, and execution to Hall Towing. The only SIREPA responsibility is to grant access to the funds for a private applicant. Smith made a motion to approve a statutory partnership pursuant to EPA Clean Ports Grant Program between Hall Towing, Inc. and Southeast Iowa Regional Economic and Port Authority, second by Dodds. Motion carried.

VI. Broadband Update (Board Information):

Fencil updated the board on the status of the broadband project: Fiber backbone construction is complete; Redundant ring has been tested with all electronics and traffic is being migrated and should be complete by the end of June; Fiber backbone in Wever is constructed; Drops for customers in town and the backbone west of Hwy 61 will begin in the coming weeks. Future updates include: Fiber lease payment to SIREPA will begin December 2024; Future funding for the remainder of Lee County possible through the Federal Program BEAD (Broadband Equity Access & Deployment); State map review for BEAD locations is under way and challenges to the map close in June; DOM-DOIT and NTIA will roll out Iowa Plan late this year; and Future funding discussion is unlikely until BEAD is awarded. No action necessary.

VII. Career Center Community Project Funding Application Update (Board Information):

Norris said he doesn't know if the project will be in the top 15 applications, but it was well received. He mentioned that he had good conversations with Congresswoman Miller-Meeks and her staff in Washington, D.C. about this project and southeast Iowa needs in general. Fraise said they formed a separate 501c3 non-profit board for the Career Center. They will hand this project over to that new board. He said Norris serves on the board as a

representative of SEIRPC and asked if anyone would like to join as a SIREPA representative. Mike Hickey expressed interest. No action necessary.

VIII Board Vacancy, City of Fort Madison (Denise Boyer resignation):

Dunn and Hickey thanked Boyer for her years of service on the SIREPA board. Hickey asked board members to think about possible replacements for Fort Madison representation.

IX Adjourn (Board Action):

Dunn made a motion to adjourn at 2:45 p.m., second by Smith. Motion carried.

Bruce Hardy, Secretary/Treasurer

Date: _____